

XXVIII. *An Extract of a Letter, giving an Account of a large number of Urns dug up at North Elmham in Norfolk. Communicated by Peter Le Neve, E/q; Norroy, F. R. S.*

Docking, July 16. 1711.

S I R,

I Was last Week at *Greffenhall*, where I was inform'd of an unusual Number of Urns lately discover'd in the Neighbourhood of that Place; which being a Curiosity relating to a part of Learning, which you are so well acquainted with, and so good a judge of, I shall take the Liberty of giving you a more particular Account of it, which I promise my self will not be unwelcome to you.

In the Parish of *Elmham*, about half a Mile from the Town (or better) there is a Close called the *Broom close*, lying on the West-side of the Road from *Elmham* to *Beetly*, and belongs to Mr *Harvy* of *Buckenham*. About *Candlemas* last some Labourers were repairing the Fence on the South side of the Close, and in the bottom of the Ditch accidentally pitch'd upon a Pot, which they expected to have been full of Money, and fell to ransacking; but finding nothing but Dust and Ashes, went to their Work again, and digging on found two or three more; but (to their great Grief and Disappointment) the Contents the same. When they came home at Night (the value of their Prize giving them no Occasion to conceal their Discovery) they publish'd what they had found, and in a little time were inform'd that

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they were Urns: The Report of which put some Persons of more Curiosity upon a further Search; and digging first under the Hedge, afterward further into the Close, found great quantities of them, and several very near together. There is one Man in the Parish who has been chiefly employed in this Search for several People, and the Number that he has taken up since the first Discovery, falls short very little of 120. and yet the compass of Ground turn'd up on this Occasion does not amount to more than a Rood of Land (*i. e.* One quarter of an Acre.) The Close where they are found is high Land, and this Place the highest part of it; the Soil a sharp Gravel, and very dry, and lies next to a Highway. As for the Urns themselves, they are generally of the same Shape, but of very different Sizes.

The Shape of these is conformable to the Representations usually exhibited in the Descriptions of Urns; *viz.* the Bottom narrow, a little flatted (and in some quite round) wider upward; the Top contracted to a narrow Mouth: The Earth coarse, the Work rough and uneven, but generally well burnt; some of them slightly wrought and indented (the Work expresses very little Skill or Care) and some plain, of which last sort I have one perfectly entire (not yet open'd)

The Size is various; some of the Capacity of a Quart, some two, some three Quarts, and one I have (unopen'd yet) that I believe will contain a Gallon.

The Pots are very tender when they come first out of the Ground, and frequently suffer by the Wounds of the Spade: They are most of them broken (more or less) in the taking of them up, and hardly any that have not their Mouths broken; of which many of them seem to be done, as they lie in the Ground, by the weight of the Earth pressing upon them, or the Feet of Horses going over them, as appears by the broken pieces of several of them found a good way down among the Earth.

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The Urns are found at uncertain Depths; some very near the Surface, some two, some three Spits deep, which is the deepest any Body has taken the Pains to dig hitherto.

As for the Contents (by what I can hear) they are generally the same. I have open'd several of them, and found in all of them plenty of pieces of broken Bones, some Black with burning, and some turn'd to Ashes, with some pieces of coarse Glass run and sticking to the Bones; which whether it proceeded from any thing of that kind burnt with the Body, or only the sandy Earth vitrified with the strength of the Fire (as I am inclined to think) is doubtful. Besides, I found some pieces of Brass, some run, some much burnt, and some not injur'd, with some pieces of Iron, but so decay'd with rust, that their Figure or Use is hard to judge of. I have some Knives and other odd things, but much eaten and decay'd with Rust: But the Brass, which is not burnt to pieces, remains generally firm and entire. One thing is remarkable, we find a great many pair of small Nippers (such as we pull out Hairs with) commonly of Brass; and most of them so perfect and good, that the Edges are full square, and the Spring as strong as any we can make of the Metall. These are chiefly the particulars of what we find: But as for Coins (which of all things were most to be wished for) we meet with none. I hear of two in the Hands of a Person of *Elmhurst*, but had not an opportunity of examining them: But when they were found or taken up I can't tell. I have one found t'other Day in an Urn, but very imperfect; what remains of the Impression looks more like *British* than *Roman*; but by the shape of the Coin and Metall it should be the latter, tho' I think not easie to determine.

I have here given you an account of our Discovery, which I am sensible would afford ground for several

Remarks ; but my design being only to give you a Narrative, and not to Criticize or make Observations, I leave that Province to those who are better able to make a Judgment of these Circumstances. And as it is pretty sure the Urns are *Roman*, and consequently that the Number must denote a Station or Colony of that People: So I should be glad to hear your Thoughts and Opinion of the Place where that Station was appointed, or Colony planted ; upon what Occasion, and at what time it might be placed there. I am, &c.

Note, Two of these Urns, of different sizes, with pieces of Bones, Ashes, Teeth, and part of an old Brass Instrument (supposed to have been a Roman Fibula) contained in them, were presented to the Royal Society by Mr Le Neve, and are in their Repository at their House in Crane-Court in Fleetstreet.

XXIX. *Some Observations upon Lough-Neagh in Ireland. In a Letter from Francis Nevill Esq; to the Lord Bishop of Clogher.*

Belturbet, Feb. 12. 1712-13.

My LORD,

I Hope it will not be amiss to give your Lordship an Account of what I have heard and observ'd of our considerable Lake *Lough Neagh*, so much talk'd of for its changing Wood into Stone, which Report is too much credited by some, who do yet live near the *Lough* ; but I can assure your Lordship, there is no such petrifying Quality in that Water. I lived fourteen Years in *Dun-*
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